

# Creating Productive Conversations

A five-day advanced workshop  
presented by The Action Design Institute

With Chris Argyris



June 22 – 27, 2008

## Workshop Results

**Creating Productive Conversations** is an intensive five-day program featuring small group work with senior Action Design faculty and a unique opportunity to work with Chris Argyris.

Effective action in organizations depends on the working relationships among individuals and groups and the quality of their conversation on crucial issues. People in organizations talk together to understand complex situations, consider options, and make choices. The tools and skills you learn in this workshop will enable you to improve the —

- Quality and speed of key business choices;
- Commitment of individuals and groups to taking action;
- Effectiveness and coordination of collective actions;
- Efficiency of information exchange;
- Professional development of organizational members;
- Trust, openness, and productivity among team members.

## Who Should Attend

This advanced program is designed for leaders, change agents, consultants, and facilitators who —

- Are changing organizations in ways that call for people to think and act in fundamentally new ways;
- Work with individuals and groups who have clashing perspectives;
- Are capable of reflecting rigorously on their own behavior in a challenging and supportive experiential learning environment.

## What You Will Learn

The workshop will enhance your ability to hold business conversations that get results and create productive relationships by helping you to —

- Design and frame conversations that promote mutual learning and action;
- Identify the logic, interests, and concerns behind disagreements;
- Ask questions that shift people's perspective and move things forward;
- State your views in ways that are both collaborative and helpful;
- Deal with emotions in ways that defuse conflicts and make progress;
- Understand the dilemmas that block learning and change;
- See the relationship dynamics that keep you and others stuck;
- Design and practice a range of ways to alter these dynamics;
- Self-correct your assumptions and actions—even in the heat of the moment;
- Create a customized action plan for continuing your development.

## Workshop Design

**Creating Productive Conversations** combines a strong conceptual framework with experiential learning and personal reflection. Components of the workshop include —

**Plenary forums** with leading edge ideas on business dialogue and relationship systems. Case studies and exercises enable you to practice applying key concepts.

**Casework in small groups** guided by a senior faculty member. Cases written in advance by participants are learning material for reflecting on reasoning and behavior and for discovering and practicing new possibilities.

**Videotaped role-play** provides an opportunity for each participant to practice intervening in a management situation and to receive feedback from faculty and fellow participants.

**Session with Chris Argyris:** Participants will have the rare opportunity to work with Chris Argyris and benefit from his wealth of experience.

**Evening Learning Trios:** Facilitated small groups of three participants provide a supportive context to practice skills and develop a customized learning plan.

**Post-institute coaching:** Following the institute, each participant will receive a coaching session with senior faculty to further your skill development.

## About Action Design

**Action Design** helps individuals and groups develop their capacity for insight, choice, and action on their most difficult issues. This program, now in its 14th year, is based on two decades of research by Action Design partners in collaboration with Chris Argyris, Donald Schön and David Kantor. It is unique in terms of the skill and experience of the faculty, and our faculty/participant ratio of 1:3 provides a rare opportunity for intensive, individualized coaching and practice. To learn more about Action Design, visit our web site at [www.actiondesign.com](http://www.actiondesign.com).

*“Enhancing our capacity for generative conversation, especially in dealing with highly contentious issues, is vital in building learning organizations. The work of Action Design is an essential foundation in developing this capacity.”*

— Peter Senge, Society for Organizational Learning

*“I’ve taken this workshop and it’s excellent. I highly recommend it to people who wish to improve their business communication, working relationships, and personal effectiveness in groups and teams. It’s also a great way to enhance interpersonal nimbleness and emotional intelligence at home.”*

— Ellen Pruyne, Research Fellow, Lancaster University, England

*“The Action Design team has been instrumental in unleashing the potential of the Women’s World Banking global team, enabling us to work together in new ways and expand our impact dramatically. These tools work.”*

— Nancy Barry, President, Women’s World Banking

*“The complex issues we face in our organizations are made infinitely more manageable by the rigorous employment of the tools offered in this course. The skills of deep dialogue and shared inquiry are presented in a way that helped me use them more confidently and effectively.”*

— Dennis Laich, Manufacturing executive and senior military officer

*“The value of the material is very clear. This approach will help me be more effective as a coach, as a team member, and as a leader of change.”*

— Chris Turner, Quality Manager, Xerox Business Services

*“Getting work done requires effective working relationships among people of diverse perspectives and experiences. The Action Design program provides both theory and practice in a laboratory-like setting in the attitudes, values, and techniques of dialog which help people to work together and produce results.”*

— Ralph Biggadike, DBA Harvard University, Professor in the Management Division, Columbia Graduate School of Business

*“The formal instruction sessions were very well done. Video sessions were most helpful in focusing on practical applications of the tools.”*

— Peter Cornell, Managing Partner, Clifford Chance

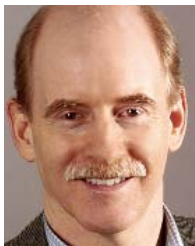


## Guest Faculty



**Chris Argyris** is the James B. Conant Professor of organizational behavior and education emeritus at Harvard University. He is the author of thirty books and three hundred articles. With Donald Schön of MIT, he has developed a theory of individual and organizational learning that sets the standard for depth of insight and focus on action.

## Workshop Faculty



**Philip McArthur** is a partner and co-founder of Action Design. He earned his doctorate in Counseling and Consulting Psychology from Harvard University, and trained in family therapy at the Family Institute of Cambridge. He is a contributor to the *Fifth Discipline Fieldbook* and *The Dance of Change*, by Peter Senge *et al.*, and collaborated on the CD-ROM, *Activating the Fifth Discipline*. Phil helps senior executives get results by transforming difficult relationships, building effective teams, and implementing change.



**Robert Putnam** is a partner and co-founder of Action Design. He earned his doctorate in Counseling and Consulting Psychology from Harvard University. He is co-author of the book *Action Science* with Chris Argyris and Diana McLain Smith, and has written several articles on reflective conversation, action science, and organizational learning. Bob works with senior executives to develop effective leadership groups, facilitates conversations across organizational boundaries, and consults on organizational change.



**Iris Lee Bagwell** is an executive coach and organizational consultant in independent practice. Iris has over twenty-five years of experience helping individuals, groups, and organizations improve their effectiveness by helping them learn to reflect on themselves and their relationships in new and more productive ways. Iris earned her master's degree in Counseling Psychology from Northeastern University, and has extensive post-graduate training in psychology and organizational learning.



**Bill Noonan** is an educator and consultant with an international practice including many learning organizations. His practice includes facilitation, conducting workshops, and designing web-based learning programs: *Forging Breakthroughs with Peter Senge* (Ninthhouse) and *Productive Business Dialogues* and *Managing Difficult Conversations* (Harvard Business Review Publishing Company). Bill is the author of *Discussing the Undiscussable: A Guide to Overcoming Defensive Routines in the Workplace* (Jossey Bass, 2007).

**Associates of Action Design** are experienced consultants and coaches who have worked with Action Design for several years. They facilitate Learning Trios.

# Creating Productive Conversations

*"I really enjoyed the Action Design workshops when I took them, but I also noticed that they had a 'time release' quality in my life. It's been a gradual process, but I have actually caught myself seeing things very differently."*

— Vicki Staebler Tardino, Organization Development Director, Maritz, Inc.

*"The Action Design Institute is among the most powerful development experiences I've had in my career. I now have tools and approaches to help me understand dilemmas, appreciate the perspective of others, and know how to help when the conversation appears stuck."*

— Paul Monus, B.S., Global Quality Manager, BP Solar



The Babson Executive Conference Center, Wellesley, MA

## Registration Information

**Tuition** — is \$5,200 per participant (nonprofit and government organizations, \$3,600). There is a \$400 discount (off the regular tuition only) for the second and additional members from the same organization.

**Accommodations** — The program will be held at The Babson Executive Conference Center in Wellesley, Massachusetts near Boston. The cost of lodging for five days, including breakfast and dinner, is \$1,255 and is due upon registering for the program.

**Cancellation Policy** — For full details on cancellations and substitutions policies, visit our web site at [www.actiondesign.com](http://www.actiondesign.com).

**To ensure personal attention, enrollment is limited to 30.**

*Action Design*  
Telephone 617 499 0007 Fax 617 965 7863

**Register on-line at [www.actiondesign.com](http://www.actiondesign.com)**

## Creating Productive Conversations / June 22 – 27, 2008

### Registration Form

name (first & last) \_\_\_\_\_  
 name (for name tag) \_\_\_\_\_  
 title \_\_\_\_\_  
 organization \_\_\_\_\_  
 address \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 city \_\_\_\_\_  
 state/province \_\_\_\_\_  
 zip/postal code \_\_\_\_\_  
 country \_\_\_\_\_  
 phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 fax \_\_\_\_\_  
 e-mail \_\_\_\_\_  
 URL \_\_\_\_\_  
 Have you ever attended an Action Design workshop?  Y  N  
 If so, when? \_\_\_\_\_

### Preferences

The information at left will be included on a list of participant contact information to be distributed to participants at the workshop. Please check here  if you do not want your information included.

I prefer to receive most of my conference materials (instructions, readings, etc.):

Via e-mail  As hard copy in the mail  Both

Preferred mailing address (if different from at left) —

**Discounts and Expenses** — Tuition is \$5,200. Please indicate any of the following —

I am entitled to the \$400 team discount.

The name of the full-paying member of our team of 2 or more is \_\_\_\_\_

I am entitled to the \$3,600 nonprofit or government organization tuition (no team discount applies).

I intend to stay at the Babson Executive Conference Center. The \$1,255 fee is enclosed.

### Method of payment (this is required)

Check (attach to a copy of this form and make payable to Action Design)

OR  Visa  Mastercard — Card Number \_\_\_\_\_

Name on card \_\_\_\_\_

Expires (MM/YY) \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

3-Digit Security Number (Appears on Back of Card) \_\_\_\_\_

OR  Invoice — Name and address to whom invoice should be sent (if different from at left) —

Action Design, 66 Amherst Road, Newton, MA 02468  
 Fax 617 965 7863 Telephone 617 499 0007 [www.actiondesign.com](http://www.actiondesign.com)